

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS



by Robert E. Swanson





Shake hands and say howdy to Robert E. Swanson of Vancouver, British Columbia. The man is a poet, ex-logger, Chief Inspector of Department of Commercial Transport Railways Branch of British Columbia, Professional Engineer, Inventor, Entertainer, Author and all around interesting stimulating person. You expect a poet to be a meek mannered fellow with long un-cut hair? Not the creator of these logging poems mister! This is a man of action. One minute after meeting Robert Eugene Swanson he invites you to call him "Bob". This man has a sense of humor longer than the haulback---just turn to page 51 and glance at the "Ballad of the Pencil Pusher" for proof of this statement.



This is one of three books of poems written by Robert E. Swanson that we are publishing. The other two, "Rhymes of a Western Logger" and "Rhymes of a Lumberjack", are books you will want.

I could talk about this man for page after page and never do him justice. For quick getting acquainted nothing beats a reading of some of his poems. Take a look at this from "The Ambitious Punk" out of "Rhymes of a Western Logger".

Out in the brush with the rigging crew I sit me down on a chunk,
And I heed the call of the "hooker's" bawl, I'm an expert "whistle punk".
My coded "toot" to the engineer, that man we curse so free,
Will start the lines and the snapping chunks and the snorting
in at the tree.

Or from the same book here is a verse from "The Ballad of the Shanty Queen".
High up, in an old-growth fir tree,
Was Curly the topper of firs,
He looked like a clinging Flicker
Hung on by his belt and spurs.

Or from the same book a verse from "The Answer to a Hooker's Prayer"
Then a raven screamed---and the whistle tooted,
The haulback slacked and the rigging scooted;
And caught in the bight of the chokers tight
'Twas the last "hang-up" that hooker would fight.

Same book again from "The Wise Donkey Puncher"
"I am the guy with the brains 'round here:
A wise, wise fellow---an engineer.

In the winter's cold I shiver and shake,
 In the summer's heat I sweat and bake;
 On topics great I know it all---
 The Life of Christ or the Romans' Fall.
 I know the cause of the strife today
 And cures for such to me is play.
 My brain is quick, my thinking clear:
 I'm the 'donkey puncher'---the engineer.

Now let's grab a handful of verses from "Rhymes of a Lumberjack". Follows a few lines from a poem called "Life in the Western Woods".

There to hear a donkey's whistle; feel the yarding donkey
 shiver;
 See the main-line stretching skyward; watch the soft ground
 heave and quiver;
 See the mighty logs come walking---crash through windfalls
 as they hurry;
 Hear them thud beneath the spar-tree; watch the chaser jump
 and scurry.
 Now the duplex roars defiance,
 Loaders toss their tongs afar;
 Watch them juggle, watch their science,
 Loading logs upon the car.

The Aberdeen Daily World says: "Robert E. Swanson has written a book of verse---that catches the flavor of logging and loggers. It sluices like rain thru the Hemlocks, and echoes the piercing donkey whistles in the age old silence of the forests. Swanson's book is not without humor too. His "Paul Bunyan was a Piker" tells of a logging engine so big that the fireman who fell in the water tank was never found until he showed up in the water glass on the side of the boiler."

Seattle Post-Intelligencer: "A book of virile verse---When he lets go with some verse-tales of riggers, hookers and their women, it's a thigh slapping rowdy-dow sort of Americana".

Victoria Daily Times: "Mr. Swanson is the loggers' poet."

Read on---enjoy yourself.

Published by:

FINLEY HAYS
 840 East 32nd Avenue
 Eugene, Oregon

CONTENTS

Frontispiece	3
Contents	5
Warning	6
The Call of the Wanderlust	8
The Ballad of the Soiled Snowflake	11
... Could Be !	16
The Cat Skinner's Prayer	17
They'll Do It Every Time	20
He's Got 'Er Made	22
The Bull Pen Blues	24
B. C. Hibal	26
Queenie the Queen o' Hearts	30
Ode to My Lady's Eyebrow	32
Nature's Hand	33
The Vengeance of the Haida Gods	36
The Heart of a Redwood	38
Climax Courageous	39
The Logger and the Raven	42
The Man from Cheyenne	46
The Call of Spring	49
The Ballad of the Pencil Pusher	51
The Tale of the Dying Tramp	53
L'Envoi	56
Glossary of Technical Terms	57
Picture Section	59

WARNING

*I have no doubt the critics frown
When they peruse my verses,
The Censor's sense of rectitude
Was wrecked on bunkhouse curses.*

*So let them judge the bookish bards
Who sing of birds and breezes,
And you and I will sing the songs
Our heart and fancy pleases.*

*And so I warn my pious friends
(In case they be offended).
It's for the likes of you and me
These ballads are intended.*

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

A BOOK OF VERSE

Concerning the trials and tribulations, lives and
ways of that red-blooded, outdoor breed of men
who have built the Great Northwest of America.

By

ROBERT E. SWANSON

Author of:

"Rhymes of a Western Rambler"

"Rhymes of a Western Logger"

"Rhymes of a Lumberjack"

Illustrated by

BERT BUSHELL

Copyright 1962 by
Robert E. Swanson



THE CALL OF THE WANDERLUST

Now the winds of spring are rampant, now the distant trails
are open,

Now the Spirit of Adventure lures us on—
To the mountains, to the desert, to the Northland, to the
ocean.

When the thaw betrays the grassland, we'll be gone.
He who knows the creak of snowshoes, he who knows the
desert's heat,

He who knows the taste of Exploration's brew:
Let him follow in the footsteps of the young men's marching
feet,
Until each one finds the thing he loves to do.

Have you sailed the rolling ocean, have you felt the flying
foam,
With a thousand fathoms deep beneath your bow?

THE CALL OF THE WANDERLUST

Have you seen the far horizon five thousand leagues from home,

And wiped the briney spray from off your brow?

Have you heard the combers thunder on a bleak and rocky shore,

When a landward gale drags anchor to the lea?

Have you fought a stalling engine when it's meant your life—
and more,

To keep your ship a mile or more at sea?

Do you know that crystal river where the rapids swirl and eddy,

With the cut-throat leaping anxious to the fly?

Have you hollered to your partner when the trout are browned
and ready,

With the fir-bark smoke a-smarting in your eye?

Have you waded in the river? Have you heard your reel
a-screaming,

When the rod is bending double to the strain?

Have you sat in placid twilight, in tranquil peace a-dreaming,

When the Varied Thrush rings out its sweet refrain?

Have you scaled that mighty mountain where the sunset's
colours blend?

Have you breathed the mountain's rare and fragrant night?

Have you lain in rocky ambush for hours and hours, on end,

'Til the mountain goat has ranged within your sight?

Have you tracked the rutting bull-moose? Have you met the
grizzly bear?

Have you slain the stealthy, green-eyed mountain lion?

Have you camped beneath the starlight, in that great, big
land—out there,

And gazed upon the jewels of Orion?

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

Have you roamed the rolling prairie? Do you know the open
spaces,

Where the foot-hills float on mirages of light?

Have you seen the painted canyons? Do you know the lonely
places,

And the pungent smell of sage brush in the night?

And that broad, ranch-house verandah where the cowboys sit
and croon

To the harmony of resonant guitars?

Have you rode into the twilight—to a swollen harvest moon

And promised her a hatful of those stars?

Now the outbound freighter whistles, now the train is steamed
and coaled up,

Now the silver plane wings upward in the blue.

Now the camping kits are loaded, now the charts are marked
and rolled up,

Now we seek the land in which we're overdue.

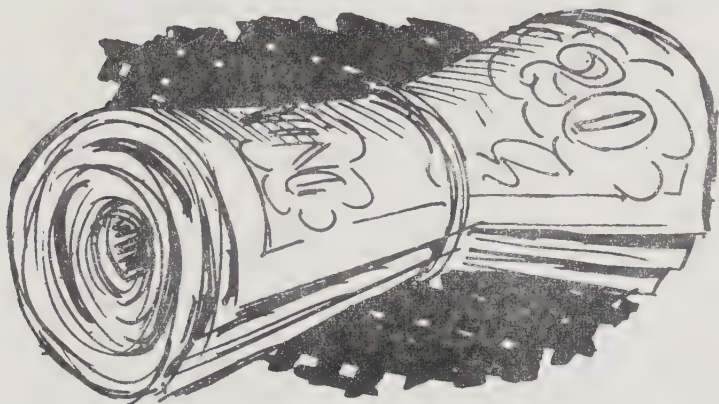
At Creation's far-flung borders; on the frozen wastes you'll
find us;

The desert's dunes where burning sands are blown;

At the earth's four distant corners we will leave our tracks
behind us,

As we blaze the trails toward the Great Unknown.

THE BALLAD OF THE SOILED SNOWFLAKE



THE BALLAD OF THE SOILED SNOWFLAKE

*The Madam was stood in her parlor when a knock was heard
on the door,
Her fairies then gathered around her to display their stock
and store.
She peered through the grill in the panel like a panther stalks
a deer
And with quick respond to the cute little blond she whispered
in her ear:*

“He’s fresh in from the jungles, dear, with a great big roll
of hay,
So stick right close beside him, and make that sucker pay.
I had my spotter down last night to watch the boats arrive,
And my taxi driver picked him up in an east-end bootleg
dive.
He’ll be my guest while you get dressed in your finest evening
frock;

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

His tonsils annoint in a cocktail joint, but bank his roll in
your sock.

Offer your charms to lure him—make sure of your feminine
wit;

But get his jack, and then come back. It's a fifty-fifty split."

"Hello, dis place!" said Mickey O'Shea, as the Madame
ushered him in.

"I'll quaff me some of your good old rum 'cuz I know you're
drinkin' gin.

Here's to the ladies—God bless 'em, and here's to the rum—
drink her down;

Skoll! bottoms up; best o' luck; fill the cup, there's plenty
more liquor in town.

Now, trot out your girls for my choosin' for my flesh is seared
with the flame

That has burned in man since the world began (O, need I
mention its name?)"

"Now, dearie," the Madame intruded, "I know you're a-rearin'
to go,

That roll you pack, of hard-earned jack, is a mighty big wad
of dough!

Just be advised by one who's wise to the tricks of the Huntress
Clan:

Stear clear of the harlot, the women in scarlet, she's out to
fleece you, man.

So let me make you acquainted with the right kind of gal
to acquire,

She's honest and true and she'll see you through, shake hands
with Molly Macquire."

THE BALLAD OF THE SOILED SNOWFLAKE

"What a woman! My God! What a woman," thought the man
from the log-jammed streams.

I'd follow her track to Hell and back, she's the girl of my
fanciful dreams.

... I've lain all alone in the darkness of the forest with boughs
for a bed,

With the towering pines up above me, and the murmuring
wind overhead—

And I've heard her voice in that stillness, and she's come like
a nymph ere the dawn,

To soothe my soul with her fondness. With the stars and the
night she'd be gone.

And always I've fancied I'd seen her in those big, deep pools
of blue

Where the cataract leaps in the river, I've heard her laughing,
there, too.

And now, just to think she's beside me—O God, but it's hard
to believe . . .

"Come, Honey, let's head for a night club," said the blonde
little daughter of Eve.

* * * *

Ten thousand drums and a big brass band, queer animals,
purple and red,

Were climbing the walls with ten pound mauls and a-thump-
ing them down on his head:

A circus of serpents performing in a bathtub full of cham-
pagne,

They were long, they were lean, they were purple and green
and a-writhing around in his brain.

... A woman—a marvel of beauty, with a form like a
sculptor's dream,

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

With rippling laughter in her eyes, like the moon on a
mountain stream,
Was calling him close to her bosom, was enticing him to her
embrace;
But always her image would vanish and the floor would
wallop his face.
Now, was it a horrible nightmare, or the jims from the liquid
fire?
Had the Madame not made him acquainted with a girl called
Molly Macquire?
He seemed to remember a road-house where the twinkling,
bright lights shone.
Then, sudden, he ran through his pockets—his roll—My
God! It was gone!!

* * * *

How cold were the streets of the city, how barren, how friend-
less and bare.
How lightly the snowflakes fluttered, pure white, on that
turbulent air;
How soon were they soiled in the gutter, their emblem of
purity stained.
Like the maiden whose visage he'd conjured in the forest
where solitude reigned.
He was heading right back to his little log shack on the
north-bound boat that night.
How he spent the day it was hard to say, yet, he seemed to
remember a fight.
Battered and bruised and badly used, and nursing a big black
eye,
While many a dame of skidroad fame was waving her love
good bye . . .

When the stewart tapped on his shoulder and beckoned him
on with a sign:

"If you're Mickey O'Shea, then follow me. You're wanted in
stateroom nine!"

It was Molly Macguire, his heart's desire, that opened the
stateroom door,

And she said with a grin, "Come on right in, you're blocking
the corridor.

You'll think I'm trickey, but listen, Mickey," said the blonde
as she opened her purse,

"Last night on the spree we saw a J.P. and you took me
for better or worse.

And here's the whole of your hard-earned roll that you gave
me to hold for you,

And now I'm your wife you can bet your life I'll always be
honest and true!"

*There's a house in the city that's builded on the sins by the
Devil ordained,*

*Where the snowflakes drift in the gutter, their emblem of
purity stained;*

*There's a little log shack in the forest where Repentance has
kindled a light,*

*And the snowdrifts gleam in the valley, untrodden, un-
tarnished and white.*

... COULD BE !

The typist girl had caught a cold
And had a running nose,
She packed around two handkerchiefs
Somewhere in her clothes—
Was sure she had them on her
Tucked down in her brassier,
The more she felt and fussed around,
She wore a look of fear.

"I'm sure they must be down there,
She said, with puzzled frown.
"I hope I haven't lost one—
It could have fallen down.
I'll put my arm down from the top
And feel around below;
For where the world it's gone to
Is what I'd like to know"

The men around the office floor
Were wondering what was wrong;
They didn't think of *handkerchiefs*
She fussed around so long.
They watched her preen with interest, keen,
Until she said, unshaken,
"I'm sure I had *two* when I came—
But might have been mistaken."

THE CAT-SKINNER'S PRAYER

I've shivered and shook on a Dozer
I've ranted, and raved, and I've cu'sed.
My kidneys are dislocated
And I've swallowed ten bushels of dust;
My fingers are broken and bleeding
From wielding the tools of repair.
O God of Internal Combustion,
Please answer a cat-skinner's prayer!

Now, I've studied your parts-book Bible
And here are the things I require:
A pair of unstretchable cat-tracks
That will never "come off" in the mire;
But the thing that would tickle my fancy,
When I'm miles from the fuel supply,
Is a tank, for both gas and for diesel,
Of the type that will never run dry.

Oh, send your toil-worn disciple,
Who has gobbled and swallowed your smoke,
A heaven-invented fuel pump
That will fire on every stroke,
A set of perfected injectors
With guts that will never wear.
O God of Internal Combustion,
Please answer a cat-skinner's prayer!

Please send me the grease of perfection
And a change of eternal oil,
Some diamond bearinged cat-rolls
That will run in abrasive soil,
A final-driving assembly
With everlasting gears,
And a set of sleeves and pistons
That will run for a million years.

Oh send me the lining, immortal
For my steering-clutch mechanism,
And a cranking-motor magneto
With permanent magnetism;
A set of valves and tappets
At which I will never swear.
Oh God of Internal Combustion,
Please answer a cat-skinner's prayer!

Great God of the Red-Hot Piston,
I have worshipped and served you well,
Forsaking the Gods of my fathers,
Till my soul has been slated for Hell!
If you'll send me the things that I ask for
I will never work Sundays again;
But I'll worship Internal Combustion
Forever and ever. Amen.



*"Oh God of Internal Combustion,
Please answer a cat-skinner's prayer!"*

"THEY'LL DO IT EVERYTIME"

Oh, they rave of Babe and Mabel
When the lines are snarled and kinking,
It is then they give the fancy women snuff,
But they rave of logs and cable
In the tavern when they're drinking,
Instead of getting 'round to do their stuff.
Oh, the air is full of branches,
And the biggest logs are yarded
When they're drinking with the ladies in the Port.
But when they eat their lunches,
Then the logging is discarded
For the king of all, both in- and outdoor, sport.

When the sunshine makes projection
Through its dust-strewn shafts of light,
Of the bunkhouse window pattern on the floor,
And the little flies go zooming
Like bombers in the night
To land upon the pinups on the door.
It is then the conversation
Of the bunkhouse Casanovas
To the giddy heights of fantasy is hurled.
And they spiel their own ovation
As the subject passes over
To the universal pastime of the world.

"THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME"

But get them at a party
When the womenfolk are handy,
They will promptly start to top and rig a tree.
It is then our bunkhouse hearty
Is a logging camp Jim Dandy
Instead of getting Mabel on his knee.
For the donkeys start a-fogging
And they'll pile the logs around you,
With the price of hemlock rising by the quart;
But when they *should* be logging
It is then they get around to
The king of all, both in- and outdoor, sport.

O THE AIR IS FULL OF BRANCHES
AND THE BIGGEST LOGS ARE YARDED
WHEN THEY'RE DRINKING WITH THE
LADIES IN THE PORT.



BUT WHEN THEY EAT THEIR LUNCHES
THE LOGGING IS DISCARDED
FOR THE KING OF ALL, BOTH IN
AND OUTDOOR SPORT.



WITH APOLOGIES TO JIMMY STANLEY

HE'S GOT'ER MADE!

He's donated his boots to the bull-cook and he's thrown his
 gloves in the fire;
 He's struttin' round camp in his oxfords, dolled up like a
 country squire;
 He's argued the point in the office on matters of bonus and
 pay,
 And he's all washed up with the outfit, and he'll soon be on
 his way.
 He's said goodbye to the rigger, to the push and his scissor-
 bill crew,
 And he's paid his regards in the cookhouse to the mixer of
 mulligan stew.
 Now, he wouldn't call Jesus his uncle, as he lights up a fancy
 cigar:
 For he's got 'er made and he's headin' fer town on the south-
 bound *Cassiar*.

He stands on the dock in the darkness till she whistles just
 ten hours late,
 And he bounds up her ancient gang-plank while her winches
 are juggling freight;
 Explains to Paddy the purser, in a world-wise sort o' way,
 That he's said good-bye to the jungles. Says Paddy, "The
Hell you say!"
 In the dining saloon he is puzzled by the spoons with the
 silvery gleam—
 He reaches across for the sugar upsetting a jugful of cream.
 Now he wishes he'd bunked in the bull-pen (with an ape he's
 about on a par),
 But he's got 'er made and he's headin' fer town on the south-
 bound *Cassiar*.

HE'S GOT 'ER MADE!

He waves farewell to the mountains as she steams by an "A"
frame show:

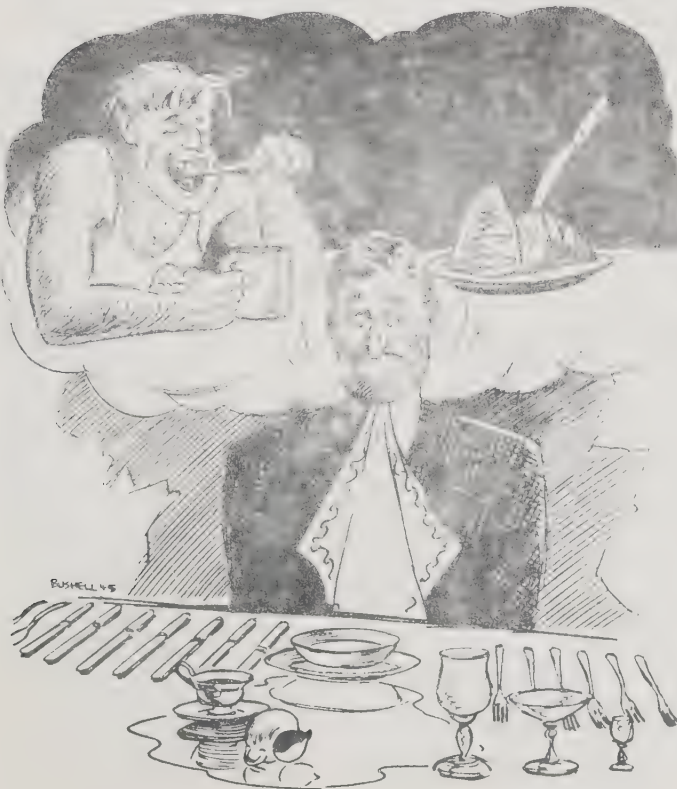
No more of yer side-hill gougin', up to yer belly in snow.
He's finished with fallin' an' buckin', with sweatin' and hittin'
the ball;

No more of yer rotten camp-cookin', he's saying good-bye to
it all.

He's living on expectations of his glorious days ahead:
He'll get him a long-haired partner, and he'll paint Van-
couver red,

And he'll never go back to the jungles—to the land of the
high-topped spar,

For he's got 'er made, and he's headin' fer town on the south-
bound *Cassiar*.



THE BULL PEN BLUES

He's back on the boat for the jungles with his face all bruised
and sore.

He's blown one thousand dollars; now he's back to earn some
more.

It seems he'll never understand the skidroad code of play:
That the only thing they want of him is just that hard-earned
pay.

Oh it's "Thank you, hon, my darling, dear. It's such a lovely
gown."

But it's "Stick him in the Bull Pen, boys," when he's broke
and leaving town.

"He ain't no good; he's just a bum; be sure to treat him
rough.

Way down below, between the decks, the Bull Pen's good
enough."

To the finely furnished office in the throbbing heart of town,
Where the typist girls apply their rouge, and the big-shot-
brains sit down—

It was there, while the taxi waited, he explained his pre-
carious plight:

How someone had stolen his wallet in a bootleg joint—last
night;

How someone had beaten and bruised him, relieved him of
of all that he had;

Now, fifty bucks would see him back, he'd catch the boat
and be glad.

"Fifty bucks!" said the tycoon, as he spoke, and his voice
was gruff.

"What does *he* want with a stateroom? Why, the Bull Pen's
good enough!"

So, he's down below in the Bull Pen on the surging, bound-
ing main.

THE BULL PEN BLUES

He'll save himself a summer's stake and do it all over again.

And he'll rear and he'll tear on the side-hill or float on the booms in the bay;

Or dodge at the holler of, "Timber-r," as the fallers rhythmically sway.

And he'll strut on the logs in the forest like a prince endowed with a crown.

For he's king in his kingdom of Woodcraft, but a serf to the harlots of town.

And they'll fawn to his whims with their favors just as long as he's buying them booze;

Then ship him off back to the jungles to the tune of the Bull Pen Blues.



B. C. HIBAL

I've toted logs in the woods of Maine,
Worked on a boom in the West Coast rain,
Topped a tree on a Redwood-show,
And I've piled pine logs in Idaho;
But a hibal show I'd yet to see
'Til I hit the woods around B. C.;
And, brother ape, I drink a toast
To the way they log on the B. C. Coast.

In town, at Hicks, my eyes explored
The jobs displayed on the hiring-board.
One caught my eye—a lone survivor;
In letters of chalk, it said, "Truckdriver."
"Ye can cross that off," I said—"and quick.
At drivin' a truck I'm mighty slick!
I'm the best gear-stripper this side of Hell . . .
McGinty's the name." And I waved farewell.

I hit the camp as a logger would,
Sampled the grub and the same was good.
Sat on my bunk with satisfaction
And doffed my city clothes for action.
It was still pitch dark when I heard the shout:
"Roll up, you bums, or else roll out;
In the cedar-swamp it's breaking day,
And around *this* joint we make her pay."



"She was gathering speed in spite of Hell!!!"

Then the foreman said, with a scowling frown:
 "The *dudes* they ship up here from town
 Are graduates of a dumbo class,
 Right off the farm, and as green as grass!"
 His voice fair reeked with authority
 As he wheeled on his heel and said to me:
 "Go, herd that truck of the Diesel breed
 And let's see some of ye'r Yankee speed."

Ye can talk of yer mammoth trucks of fame,
 But this one put them all to shame.
 She was air equipped, with a torque retarder,
 With gauges enough for a slack-line-yarder.
 She'd twelve-foot bunks and a streamlined snout.
 So I warmed her up and headed out;
 That diesel purred like a cougar-cat
 As I clipped a mile in a minute, flat.

Then I hit the grade and the rip-wrap plank,
 So I gives the gear-shift knob a yank:
 She rubbed the guard as the rear-end slewed
 (But kept on gaining altitude).
 Up—up she roared, as on we went,
 Up a grade of twenty-two percent.
 'Til, dead ahead, I could plainly see
 The lashing lines of a full-rigged tree.

There, a diesel-yarder did her stuff
 From a cold-deck pile on a big rock bluff.
 And the echoes resounded with never a pause
 From the diesel-electric falling-saws;

While beneath the tree, on a pre-load rig,
Was a load of logs—God awful big.
I backed my trailer beneath that load
And I steered the works for the rip-wrap road.

I was doing fine when I hit the grade,
But here's the only mistake I made:
I'd plumb forgot in the bustle and roar
That it froze black frost the night before.
The more I braked, the more she slid,
Then, eighteen tires began to skid!
I hit the guard-rail—hugged it well . . .
She was gathering speed in spite of Hell!

* * * *

I was dazed but I sat on a cedar chunk
And gazed at a mangled pile of junk.
A pile of junk that was once the truck
From which I'd escaped with Devil's own luck.
I dangled afar from the tangled wreck
To make a long cross-country trek;
And they never found out at the hiball joint
That I caught the boat at a distant point.

And late that night, as I hit the trail,
I could hear an air-horn's mournful wail.
They were yarding logs in the dead of the night,
And falling trees by the pale moonlight.
I could hear the roar of a diesel truck
A-wheelin' logs to the briney chuck:
But the boys maintain on the B. C. Coast
What I really heard was McGinty's ghost.



QUEENIE, THE QUEEN O' HEARTS

Now, speakin' of women—I've been with a few—the sober,
the good, and the bad.

I've settled to none but I've had my fun wherever was fun
to be had;

I've learned some tricks from the slick, blond chicks, ah,
many's the dandy I've seen;

But I learned what I know about women and love from
Queenie, my Skid-Road Queen.

QUEENIE, THE QUEEN O' HEARTS

Now, one was a kid from the Prairie: she was green and
she didn't know how.

I was teaching her love by installment and I would have been
nursing her now;

But I moved further north to Alaska—got a squaw by the
name o' Irene,

And I conquered her heart by displaying the art that I'd
learned from Queenie, the Queen.

And then it was Winnie the waitress—a bundle of love and
desire,

Her tresses were treated with henna and scorched to the colour
of fire.

She doubted at first if she'd make me (I was shy and a little
bit green),

But I cancelled her doubt when she tried, and found out
what I'd learned from Queenie, the Queen.

Then, Sarah, the minister's daughter: at first she was shy
and demure,

But I got her one night on the sofa and it didn't take long 'til
I knew 'er.

She sobbed and she cried like a youngster and babbled how
naughty we'd been;

She wanted to wed, but I showed her, instead, what I'd learned
from Queenie, the Queen.

But I met with a feminine joker that was cunning and slick
as a mink.

She made me go bail for her husband, who was cooling his
heels in the klink.

She promised her pleasures so freely, and told me to call her
Delphine;

Though I bought her a fur I could never show *her* what I'd
learned from Queenie, the Queen.

So Queenie, the Queen, is the queen of the lot, and I found
that the last was the worst;

For the more you fool 'round and the more that you know,
the more you'll remember the first.

And each has a *first* he remembers imprinted on memory's
screen;

And each has a past (though his *first* be the last) and each
has his Queenie, the Queen.

ODE TO MY LADY'S EYEBROW

Her brow reflects her every whim:

Whether 'tis me she loves, or him.

If arched, her brow, in lilting laughter,

Tells me a kiss will follow after.

When lowered in a curving line

I wonder if I'm doing fine;

And then, at times, her brow says clearly,

"I love you, darling, O so dearly."

Proudly they span those lustrous eyes

When she's amazed in sweet surprise.

If knitted in a gloomy dip

My darling pouts her lower lip,

And then I say good-bye to glee,

"Move over, dog, make room for me."

But soon they arch in proud-flung joy

And say, "I love you, darling boy."



NATURE'S HAND

The work of Nature's awful hand
Rests in the western clime:
Where rolling plain and mountain high
Outlive recorded time;
Where swollen sun of a blood-stained hue
Sinks in the Western Sea,
Those flaming sunsets burned the sky
Before man came to be.

Those awe-inspiring Rockies
With spires like giant teeth
Set in the jaw of mountain range
Where valleys yawn, beneath,
Like tired Creation taking rest,
The clouds her panting breath;
For Mother Nature's awful hand
Knows not the pall of Death.

The gnarled and twisted strata
Of those huge colossal peaks
Reflects Creation's magnitude,
Of great upheaval speaks.
Where once the stupid dinosaur
Wallowed in shallow streams
Is now the crest of mountain range—
Fantastic though it seems.

Those sedimentary sandstones were
Laid down by ancient streams
Meandering through their peneplains—
Her plan thus Nature schemes.
What seems complete is just begun,
She merely sits at rest;
Has changed her whole work over
For naught can stand her test.

What was the dizzy altitude
Is now the valley's floor.
In yester-age the solitude—
Today, Niagara's roar.
She'll change it all in man-made time
And do it o'er again.
Oh man! her meagre creature here,
Ye dare to check her rein?

The drenching storms are but her tears,
The lightning bolt her wand;
And planets in their orbits fare
As pawns to her respond.

For time and space mean naught to her;
 (The product of man's mind)
Boundless infinitude is She,
 Yet part of all mankind.

Pause yet a moment, mortal man,
 In your brief sojourn here,
Let wait your burning treasure lust,
 Your superstitious fear—
Your greed for power to rule the world:
 Remember mortal flesh
Is but a part of Nature's plan.
 Her die can cast afresh.

Think not that man of earth-bound greed
 Can comprehend her flaws,
Nor do her bidding, yet, awhile,
 Your conscience knows her laws.
For she doth rule her universe
 With hand like iron rod;
Remember, Mother Nature is
 But just the hand of God.

THE VENGEANCE OF THE HAIDA GODS

There's a dark-eyed maiden waiting where the Northern Sun
sweeps low,
In her sealskin robes she's standing where the ocean breezes
blow.
And at night she stands there dreaming of her loved one,
far away,
When the Haida Moon is gleaming on the ice floes—'cross
the bay.

On the shores of Old Skedan,
There she met her sailor man,
And her dark eyes flashed their greeting,
And her love-life thus began:
"Bring me back my reckless lover,
Bring him back ere yet ye can;
Bring me back my wandering sailor
To the shores of Old Skedan."

But the sailor kept on roaming on a far and distant strand,
And the Haida maiden waited in her Northern tribal land.
Now a broken-hearted maiden sleeps in peace for evermore,
'Neath the towering trees, snow-laden, on her native Haida
shore.

Journey back to Old Skedan,
O you faithless sailor man.
Place the cross of faith upon her—
On her grave ere yet ye can.
Journey back to Old Skedan,
O you reckless sailor man,
Ere the Haida Gods wreak vengeance
From the shores of Old Skedan.

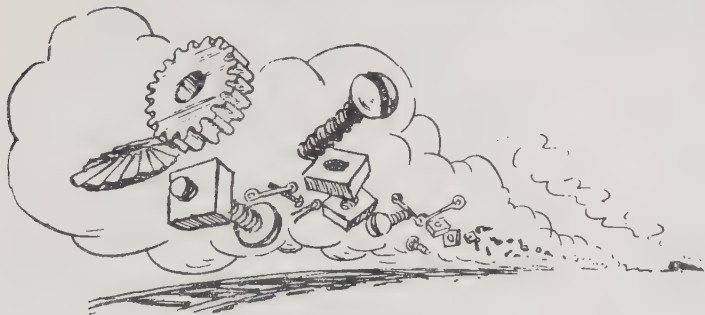


"And the Haida Maiden waited in her Northern tribal land."

THE HEART OF A REDWOOD

Perhaps, in this secluded spot,
Some valiant warrior might have fought
His mortal foe with flint-hewn knife;
Each grappling, tussling for his life,
Then, drinking deep, the gushing blood
Oozed in the sod its crimson flood.
The valiant warrior here lay still;
The ebon raven gorged his fill;
. . . And ages passed . . .
Yet, here where once a warrior bled,
This giant tree, a seedling, fed,
Staining its heart that blood-like red . . .
The murmuring wind bespeaks his woes:
This might have been. Who knows? Who knows?





CLIMAX COURAGEOUS

It was out on a haywire, homeguard show
Where the ground was rough and the crew was slow;
Where a rusty, crooked railroad track
Wound out of camp past the rigger's shack.
Within that shack, in wedded bond,
Resided the rigger's wife—a blonde—
Who was wont to wave with a glint in her eye
At the engineer as he thundered by.
His ancient Climax, worn with years,
Would clash and clang its hypoid gears,
Shiver and shake and hump its back
As it wheeled those cars up the crooked track.

Now Dusty Dan, the engineer,
Was fond of women, wine, and beer,
But a fondness, still, excelled all these:
He'd tinker and toy on his bended knees
Down underneath, in the filth and stench,
And tighten up nuts with a monkey-wrench.
The Climax coughed like a horse with the heaves
Shedding its nuts like autumn leaves
Till scattered along that right-o'-wa
Full many a bolt and pinion lay.
But at last one day, with her valve-stem slack,
She stalled in front of the rigger's shack.



Out piles Dan, as the Old Girl stalls,
Doffs his cap and his overalls,
And in he goes, as large as life,
To monkey-wrench for the rigger's wife.
The panting Climax, standing by,
Was shedding grease on the railroad tie.
And every day when the line was clear
Her air pump churned the atmosphere:
Till the ties in front of the rigger's shack
Were covered and coated with gear-grease black.
(And the Super learned from the office clerks
That the chief was fixing her water works.)

But out in the woods where the cables hum
The main-line had bust right close to the drum,
An empty landing, bleak and bare,
Greeted the train crew's dismal stare.
The loaders slept beside the grade,
While empty tongs in circles swayed
Above the empty cars, below,
Where loaded logs had ought to go.
The weary engineer leaned out
And hearkened to the brakeman's shout:
"We'll wait for loads—so spot yer fire
And monkey wrench to yer heart's desire."

The breathing pulse of the air pump dies,
While Dusty Dan his art applies
Deep in the guts of her vital points,
A-wrenching the nuts of her flexible joints.
Like a monster wakes from a fitful dream
Her pistons throbbed the pulse of steam!
And Dusty Dan rolled down the bank
As he missed the grabs on her water tank.
Away she rolls, down the crooked track,
Shedding her nuts with her brake-shoes slack,
And gathering speed, with the switches lined,
She left the gaping crew behind.

As thunder rolls on a mountain ridge
The Climax crossed the Bear Creek bridge,
Her flanges screaming upon the rail
As she steered her course down the mountain trail.
While far to the rear in hot pursuit
Galloped the crew—with the Super to boot.
The brakeman said, as he cursed his luck,
"She'll pile in the weeds or she'll plunge in the chuck."
But an awful silence strains their ears,
No more is heard the clash of gears.
With her smoking wheels still on the track
She was stalled in front of the rigger's shack.

THE LOGGER AND THE RAVEN

Low the summer sun was sinking; still I pondered, dreaming,
thinking—

Thinking of the soul's departing when it leaves this world of
woe.

In that sunshine's level gleaming, might have been that I
was dreaming

On that bare and barren hill-top, far above the sea, below;
On that wild, deserted mountain where the phantom breezes
blow.

Faint, at first, I heard a rasping like a soul in terror gasping,
Like an organ-pipe, discordant, with a reedy, rasping note.
And it said: "Oh, fellow mortal, ponder not on things im-
mortal

Past that veiled and deathly portal where the vampire
spirits float—

Past the rosy realms of reason where the imps of Pluto gloat

"Ere Time's grim and grizzled reaper sent my soul to Hades'
keeper

A mortal man I wandered in the realms where men abide.

Ah, I recollect, so clearly, how I lived and loved too dearly,

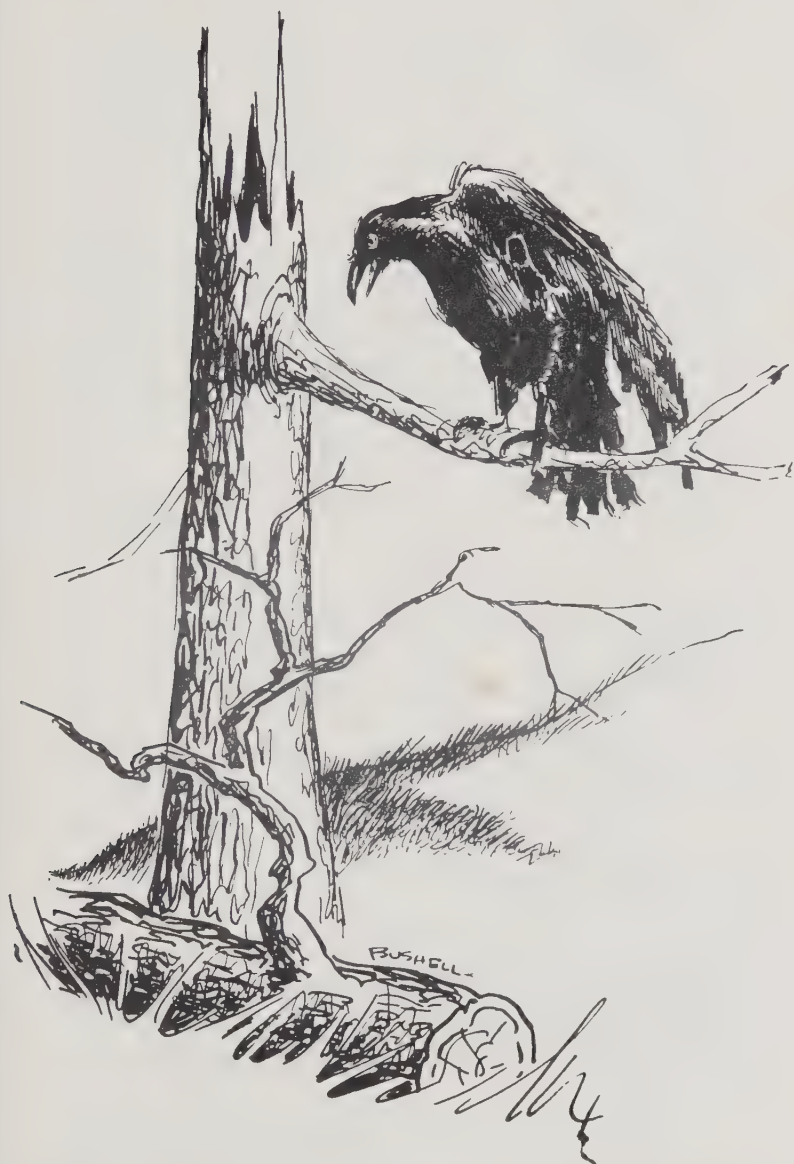
A girl more fair than Venus ere I crossed that Veiled Divide—

A girl whose smile still lingers like the sun at eventide.

"Ringing still, her loving laughter through Time's Corridors,
thereafter

Haunts me—taunts this soul in terror with an all-consuming
shame.

THE LOGGER AND THE RAVEN



"For a raven sat beside me, perched upon a shattered tree."

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

Yet, how well this soul, in sadness, recollects the thrills, the
gladness,
That was ours in love's mild madness, to be sealed in
Heaven's Name—
To be sealed before the altar 'neath the flickering candles'
flame.

"Like the soothing intonation of a minstrel orchestration
Stirs the soul of him who listens—grips him in a rapturous
spell . . .
Then, before his eyes there flashes wrongs that sting like
leathern lashes
When a brazen cymbal clashes its shivering, clangorous
knell.
Thus love's interlude was ended with that one I loved too
well.

"Low a gloomy cloud descended ere love's interlude had
ended,
Dark the nebulous intruder crossed my star-flung Milky
Way.
Oh, a devil was the potter when he formed that roughish
rotter,
For with lover's lies he got her focused as his spell-bound
prey,
And she yielded to his pleadings and King Pluto held his
sway.

"Seemed it, now, possessed within me was a demon, deemed
to win me
From the paths of Truth and Reason to the grasping clutch
of crime.
All my aspirations shrinking I betook myself to drinking,

THE LOGGER AND THE RAVEN

Still my brooding brain kept thinking of that stolen love,
sublime;

And the demon's voice would whisper, 'Coward, kill him,
waste no time.'

"Thus possessed and evil-passioned, straight, an arrow's shaft
I fashioned,

With its plume a raven's feather and its point a lethal dart.
Deep into the twilight wending: shadow unto shadow
blending;

Evil unto evil sending, when I bade that shaft depart:
But the raven's feather veered it and it pierced my lover's
heart!

"Thus Love's Goddess was offended, so my mortal life was
ended,

And Death's grim and grizzled reaper took my soul from
mortal clay."

With concluding words it stated: "We are spirits doomed
and fated,

Here, on earth, reincarnated, punished souls we wing our
way;

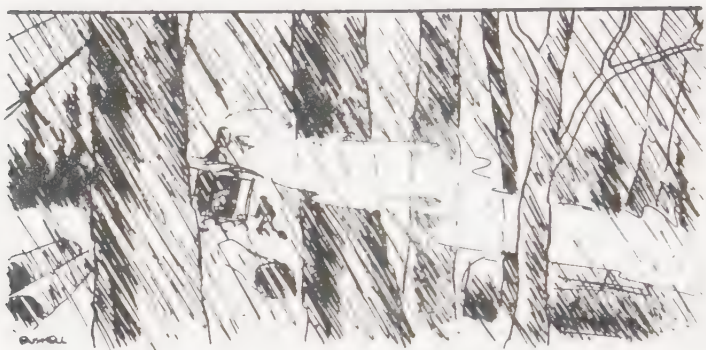
Doomed as ravens in the forest where as men we lived our
day."

* * * *

Low the summer sun was sinking, there I pondered, wonder-
ing, thinking:

Was that voice the phantom echo of some lost mythology?
Little wonder that I ponder on that mystic dream out yonder,
Where the ghostly shadows wander in black-plumed fantasy;
For a Raven sat beside me perched upon a shattered tree.

*Note: A legend of the Northwest says that every raven in the
forest is the soul of a departed woodsman.*



THE MAN FROM CHEYENNE

*Our stakes were made—two days to go:
When the boat arrived, into town we'd blow;
And we'd sit in a lobby, so snug, in town
A watchin' the snow come tumblin' down.*

The wintery sky was dismal and bleak
As the rigging came back like a silver streak.
In a sleeting rain that would soon be snow
We were soaked to the skin from head to toe;
While the white exhaust in a phantom breeze
Seemed to drift clean through the stumps and the trees.
Yet, the Greenhorn Kid would jump in and collar
His Bardon Bell ere the hooker could holler.

In at camp that night, on the window pane,
The steam from our socks trickled down like rain;
With our Stanfield suits all hung there drying,
And a howling wind through the rafters sighing:

Said the Greenhorn Kid, "Now look here, pards.
I'll go you gents to a game of cards."
With a wink, says Slim, "We'll trim this joker;
We'll fatten our stakes in a game of poker.
Spread the table-cloth of a blanket, grey,
And we'll shuffle the pack and start in to play."

When the deck was cut and we dealt around
The flutter of cards was the only sound.
Low stakes at the start (and a nod on the sly)
"Let him win three hands, then milk him dry.
We'll play this game to it's finest point
And we'll spend his dough in a plush-lined joint.
Women and wine, and a parlour, warm,
And we'll laugh at the kid in the winter's storm."

Soon the pot was raised and the game broke loose
While the fallers stood, jowls full o' snoose,
Around in a ring, intently still,
Like a wolf pack watching the lead-wolf kill.
To the kid, said Slim, "You, skin the cat."
I opened the pot and we both sat pat . . .
With the kid all out, the stakes sky-high,
An ace in the hole and we milked him dry.

Then the Greenhorn Kid, like he held an ace,
Put a chip on the cloth just to hold his place.
To the bull-cook's shack, in the rain, he scoots,
And he bummed ten bucks on his new caulked boots.

But a different kid was he who came
Back to the shack to continue the game.
“. . . The code of the game is the law of the pack:
Stick around for the kill and you might win back.”
It was thus he expounded nonsensical rot
As he opened the play with a ten in the pot.

His eyes glowed bright but his face grew bland
As he dealt that pack with an agile hand . . .
He raised the pot—then I saw him flinch!
I watched my mate and it looked like a cinch
For a bob-tail-flush, or four-of-a-kind,
So I threw in my cheque, all duly signed.
A murmur arose . . . I felt like a heel.
Snuff colored Gods! could that man deal!!
For the kid lay down and he stood ace-high,
Raked in the pot and he milked *us* dry.

* * * *

In the brush next morn at the crack of dawn,
In a yard of snow with our stakes all gone,
We thought of the kid, all dressed up fine,
A-heading for town where the bright lights shine.
Would he think of us in the winter's storm
With his feet propped up, in a lobby, warm?
Well, I think he did; 'cause he nailed this note
On our bunkhouse door ere he caught the boat:
“Look me up some time if you're 'round Cheyenne,
And learn how to deal, from a gamblin' man.”



THE CALL OF SPRING

The skylines sweep o'er the side-hills, steep—'cross the bowl
of the azure sky,
And the echoes roll from knoll to knoll as the swishing cross-
cuts fly;
The toppling trees sing melodies that are music sweet to the
ear,
And the waters roar on the canyon floor, but, O, so crystal
clear,
It's the only life removed from the strife of a world gone
raving mad.
So when axes ring at the call of Spring, its a thrill and my
heart feels glad.

O, to breathe the air of the Great-Out-There, when the spring-
flushed torrents race,
Where things are real and a man can feel the beat of the rain
on his face,

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

As he breasts the gale on the open trail in that great, big
Outdoor Land,
When the woods turn green by a wand, unseen, in the grip
of Nature's hand.
O, I want to go where the breezes blow and the white waves
hurl on the shore,
And the swallows return—it is then that I yearn to be back
in the woods once more.

O, to hear the frogs in that land of logs ring out their spring-
time tune,
As the starlight shines through the stalwart pines, and I see
the pale spring moon.
When the breeze is stilled, and the east is filled with the blush
of the new-born day,
The morning mist will roll and twist as it moves out, down
the bay.
While the coffee brews I'll lace my shoes and watch those
colors change
As the rising sun puts gold upon the snow-capped mountain
range.

So remove me, afar, from the clang and the jar of your city's
ceaseless roar,
And set me down miles, miles from a town on a pathless
woodland shore—
For I've had enough of your big town stuff until now my
belly's full:
I'm tired of your streets, of your two-bit cheats with their
well-phrased, well-slung bull.
And I'm sick in the crop of your restaurant slop, of your mobs,
and your city's smoke.
When the robins sing at the Call of Spring, I'll be glad to go
back . . . 'cause I'm broke.

THE BALLAD OF THE PENCIL PUSHER

He's a mile above the average and a little bit high-hat—

Quite a bit above the boys that hit the camps.

Educated—highly polished—he's a real aristocrat.

And he won't associate with lowly tramps.

He treats us with disdain,

Cuz he figures we're insane

When we pound upon his counter our demands:

Lets us rave and lets us holler;

Lets us burn beneath the collar;

Lets us wince, and lets us squirm at his commands.

He was born to rule the rabble with a sharp, sarcastic tongue.

And he'll never miss a chance to slap them down.

But he takes it, and he likes it, when the Super flings the dung;

Or when he 'phones the Big Shots in the town.

Then he'll sweetly acquiesce,

So his answer's always—"Yes!"

And he'll yes, and yes, and yes, for all his worth.

If the boss turns on the laughter

He will quickly follow after,

And show his golden molars as in mirth.

Though the boss's jokes are corny and he's heard them all
before,

He is never rude enough to interfere.

When the boss walks in the office, he is tickled to the core,

He will drop a little tale into his ear:

Sweetly crooning: "Yes, J. B.,

It's the truth, you look and see.

Those trucks are only hauling half-a-load."

It is thus he sows dissension

With venomous intention.

And another man goes walking down the road.

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

He is seething with ambition, and his underhand desire
Is to put the superintendent on the run.
He's the brains around our outfit (though he cannot hire
and fire)
But he loves to tell us how it should be done.
There is nothing he don't know,
For he thinks he runs the show,
And without his help we cannot get along.
He's discovered we all hate him,
And he knows we underrate him;
But he thinks he's right, and all the world is wrong.



THE TALE OF THE DYING TRAMP

He was one of the clan of the open road
That carried his home on his back.
He had no friends nor fixed abode,
Just an old, brown duffle-sack;

A picture or two of a girl he knew,
An ancient shaving kit,
Some rumpled shirts and a few ripe socks
As strong as a brakeman's mit.

We'd carried him into the first-aid shack,
His caulked boots lay on the floor,
And we laid him down on the flat of his back
Never to rise no more.

He gazed in the fading light of day,
With a sad and wistful eye.
As his lips grew numb I heard him say,
"My time has come to die."

"I was just a bum of the cinder trail,
But now I'm a dying tramp,
Who's found that the road of the glittering rail
Ends in a lumber camp.

"Yet I was the pride of a college dean
In the days of my flaming youth,
The pride of a mother's joy, serene,
Who sought the truest truth.

"I sought Ambition's brightest star
To which I set my helm,
Till I was the Chief—the mighty Czar
Of a great industrial realm.

"But cold Ambition's beacon fire
Too soon will lose its shine
For Passion's glow and heart's desire,
And a woman's lips, divine.

"A woman smiled; the Devil grinned,
And Fate's hand rolled the dice.
And so, serenely, on I sinned
In a fool's own paradise.

"I found she played a two-time part
And panic seized my brain,
I drilled her lover through the heart,
Then grabbed a west-bound train.

THE TALE OF THE DYING TRAMP

"A wanted man from year to year
Beneath a boundless sky . . .
Till Fate decreed I wander here,
Into this camp to die.

"You ask my name? Perhaps you've heard . . .
. . . God! Help me—get—my breath . . ."
But ere he spoke another word
His lips were sealed in death.



L'ENVOI

We've sung the songs of virile men
Who roam the outdoor land,
Where Comradeship and Brotherhood
Unite our restless band.
God knows we've faltered now and then.
But God will understand.

And now, farewell, the hills grow dim,
The sun's last vagrant ray
Upon the mountain's ragged peaks
Reflects the parting day;
And darkness clothes the canyon's rim—
I lay my pen away.



GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

A

"A" frame show—a tower built in the form of the letter "A", 150 feet high, rigged up on a float, a show is logged off with this rig.

B

Bardon-bell—Bardon choker hook of manganese steel.

bob-tail-flush—a hand of cards in poker.

boom—logs rafted for water towage.

bull-cook—the man who tends fires etc. in camp.

bull-pen—second class steerage on a northern boat.

bunk—a rude form of bed

bunk—anything but the truth.

bunk—in equipment' the chairs on the truck or car upon which logs are carried.

bunk house—the residence of anything but a happily married man.

C

cat—a caterpillar tractor.

cat-tracks—the tread of a cat tractor.

cat-rolls—the rolls upon which cat tracks operate.

cat-skinner—Caterpillar tractor operator.

cinder-trail—a large main line railroad.

caulked boots—spiked boots for walking on logs.

chuck—Chinook word for salt water.

chunk—a log not bucked off at both ends; usually left in the woods.

cold-deck pile—pile of logs to be yarded to home tree.

cross cuts—cross cut saws for cutting logs.

Climax—a type of broken down geared locomotive.

D

diesel yarder—diesel powered yarding donkey.

diesel-electric falling saws—power saws for falling and bucking' using diesel-electric power from a portable central generator, 180 cycle A.C. current.

dozer—a bull dozer which is a cat-tractor fitted with a blade for excavating.

F

falling and bucking—falling trees and cutting them up into logs.

four-of-a-kind—a hand of cards in poker.

G

gear-stripper—truck driver, sometimes "gear jammer".

guard rail—fender log on a plank road.

BUNKHOUSE BALLADS

H

- haywire—of low standard or broken down.
 hemlock—a type of tree logged in the west.
 hitting-the-ball—working very fast.
 hiring board—blackboard upon which jobs are written in a hiring office.
 hypoid gears—bevel driving gears whose pinion shaft centre is above
 (or below) the shaft centre of the driven gear.
 home guard—a man who works for the same company and never quits
 his job.

I

- inkslinger—time-keeper.

J

- jungle—a term meaning the logging camps in general.
 J. P.—Justice of the Peace.

K

- King Pluto (Greek mythology)—Ancient Greek god of the underworld.

L

- loaders—the men who load logs onto cars or trucks.

P

- pencil pusher—time-keeper.
 peneplain (geological)—a region reduced almost to a plain by the long,
 long-continued normal erosion of a land surface; it should be
 distinguished from a plain produced by the attack of waves
 along a coast.
 pre-load-rig—in truck logging logs are loaded upon a hydraulically
 raised and lowered dummy truck and when loaded the real truck
 is backed under and the load transferred to the truck.

R

- rip-wrap—cable spiked crossways on a plank road for traction.

S

- sedimentary (geological)—rock formed by the sediment in water or
 from air.
 side-hill-gouging—this term is derived from the mythical animal known
 as a side-hill-gouger, whose right front and back legs are very
 short while the left-side legs are very long. This animal is said to
 frequent side hills and can only travel in one direction, conse-
 quently it runs around the mountain in one direction only.
 skin-the-cat—to deal the cards.
 skylines—overhead logging cables.
 stake—wages saved up to spend on a spree.
 scissor bill—term expressing stupidity.
 slack-line-yarder—a ponderous complicated skyline donkey engine.
 stanfield suits—long woolly underwear.
 Timber-r—warning cry to watch falling tree.
 tame ape—a real logger.
 tongs—tongs for grappling logs in loading.
 tycoon—an industrial potentate or a big boss logger.

V

- Venus (Greek mythology)—The Goddess of Love.

*Note: For complete Glossary of Technical Terms see "The Loggers
 Dictionary" in (Book I) "Rhymes of a Western Logger."*







